

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**February 1, 2004**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
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**DEQ Seeking Comments on a Quarry Permit Supplemental Environmental Assessment**

**Helena – The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is seeking public comment on a general quarry permit supplemental programmatic environmental analysis (SEA). The SEA is needed to reconcile language in the draft and final EAs published in 1999 for General Quarry Permits with that found in the Metal Mine Reclamation Act (MMRA) and to provide clarification for items that were unclear.**

**The General Quarry Permit was developed to address the need to regulate the expanding number of small quarries and rock collecting sites in Montana. Such sites traditionally have been regulated under a Small Miners Exclusion Statement (SMES). Many operators, however, have more than the maximum of two sites allowed under a SMES, but do not cause the level of environmental impacts appropriate for a full Operating Permit. The proposed language change would allow any individual small quarry to maintain a working disturbance of up to 5 acres. Total disturbance during the life of an individual operation could exceed 5 acres, but concurrent reclamation would be required to keep the disturbance at any one time to 5 acres or less. This language is consistent with that found in the MMRA with regard to mines that operate under the SMES.**

**The permit would apply if there is no potential for impact to surface or groundwater, where the excavation of rock does not result in acid rock drainage, and where no water impounding structures, other than for storm water control, are constructed. In addition, the permit would only apply to sites where there are no cultural resources, wetlands, or threatened and endangered plant or animal species. Sites may occur on federal, private, or state lands.**

**A 30-day comment period on the draft SEA will begin on February 5, 2004 and end on March 5, 2004. Any comments, suggestions, or questions will be welcome during that period. Written comments may be sent to the Environmental Management Bureau, Permitting and Compliance Division, DEQ, P.O. Box 200901,**

Helena, MT 59620-0901. Letters must be postmarked by March 5, 2004.  
Comments can also be sent by e-mail to [pplantenberg@sttae.mt.us](mailto:pplantenberg@sttae.mt.us).

For more information on the draft SEA or to request a copy of the draft SEA call Patrick Plantenberg at (406) 444-4960 or Pete Strazdas at (406) 444-4962. The draft SEA is also available on the DEQ web page at <http://www.deq.state.mt.us/ea.htm>.

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